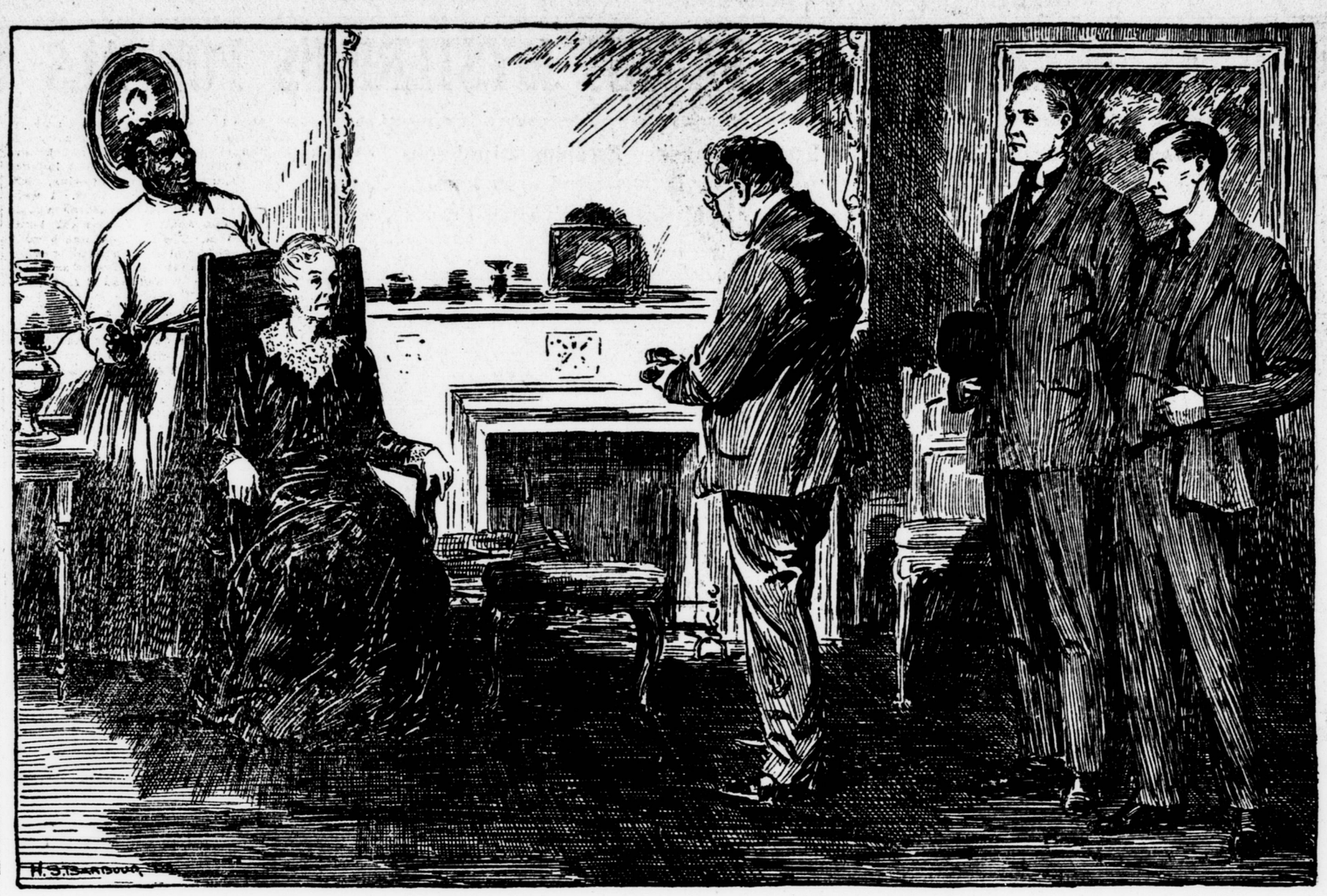
Sentiment, Charm and Surprises Were Involved When Our Square Received Social Recognition.

TAZMUN

By SAMUEL HOPKINS ADAMS, Creator of Entertaining and Inspiring Characters.



MR. BOGGS DID THE TALKING IN TERMS WORTHY OF HIS ENVIRONMENT.

STRANGERS in Our Square stop and stare at No. 17. In itself the house is unremarkable; a dull brown rectangle with a faintly mildewed air about the cornices. It is this sign on the front which attracts the startled notice of the wayfarer—

THE ANGEL OF DEATH
One Flight Up and Ring Bell

To use of the Squart the placard is a commonplace, and the Angel of Death just Boggs, a chunky, bristly little man with gold teeth and a weak, meek, peanut-whistle voice, who conducts a worthy though humble enterprise of hygiene and cleanliness more specifically set forth in the legend running, crimson, across the top of his business card—

BOGGS KILLS BUGS

Once in the long ago that explicit announcement had flamed upon the house front. It yielded to the more dignified form when Mme. Tallafftrr took Mr. Boggs' top floor. She said that she could not live over it, and the landlord sacrificed his prized alliteration rather than lose a lodger so elegant and aristocratic. So the sign came down and she went up. With her went furniture, scanty but magnificent, a silver-inlaid lock box locally credited with safeguarding the Pemberton family diamonds, Sempronius, who was fat and black and a cat, and Old Sally, who was fat and black and a thief.

Mr. Boggs' lodger was all that is most glorious in southern lineage. Her full style and title was Mme. Rachel Pinckney Pemberton Tallafferr, with two ls, two fs and two rs, if you value her favor. She belonged to no less than seven "Daughters-of" organizations with sumptuous stationery, and to a spirit guidance group.

In person Mme. Tallafferr was spare, tall and straight. She became known to the locality, behind her back, as the duchess. She made occasional excursions, going westward and uptown, sometimes actually in an automobile, and always escorted by Old Sally. It was understood (from the boastful Mr. Boggs) that on such occasions his lodger was going into society.

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BUT though aloof she was not alien. She could in time of need descend from her remote Olympus and lend a hand. Tht first occasion was when a sudden and disastrous spring epidemic of that Herod of diseases, diphtheria, swept down upon our Square, bringing panic in its train. Then the Duchess consulted briefly with the Little Red Doctor. Sht put on the black silk of splendor, the Pinckney laces and the Pemberton diamonds, and thus girded for the fray, went forth, a spare, thin-lipped, female St. George, against our local dragon. Wherever that sane and confident presence appeared, panic gave way to reason and mutiny to obedience. The Little Red Doctor delivered his estimate of her:

"Cold nerve and tradition. Our Square ought to put up a statue to her—in steel."

Against which may be set off the Duchess' summing up of the Little Red Doctor:

"He seems a worthy young man."

Yet she possessed understanding, too, of a subtle, fine and profound kind. Otherwise she could never have done for Schepstein's what she did when Schepstein's twenty-year-old Metta killed herself through taking poison tablets (by mistake of course, as the Little Red Doctor perjuriously certified). In his hour of lonely grief and shame, Our Square turned its back upon the little cross-eyed, cross-grained, agnostic trafficker in old debts, old furniture, old books, old stamps, old silver and anything else old which he could buy from the uninformed and sell to the covetous, because we feared his savage and cynical rebuffs. But when the furtive hearse and the one carriage for Schepstein, which was to have been the whole of little Metta's funeral, drew up at night before the Schepstein flat, Mme. Rachel Pinckney Pemberton Tallafferr descended her steps and crossed Our Square. Behind her waddled Old Sally with an armful of white roses. They met Schepstein at the foot of his steps, following his dead. As the casket passed her, Madame Tallafferr took the wealth of bloom from the servant and scattered its snowy purity above the girl. At that the face of Schepstein, which had been cold lead-gray, changed and flushed and softened, and he staggered suddenly where he stood and might have fallen had not that strong old woman thrust an arm under his to help him on his way. So two mourners went in the lone carriage to little Metta's funeral.

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ONLY long afterward was this known to Our Square. What established the Duchess as an Olympian controller of destinies was her handling of MacLachan, the Tailor. MacLachan, on his black, alcoholic days, was wont to sing "The Cork Leg." On this occasion he sang it, sitting on the coping of the fountain with his legs in the water, and beating time with a revolver. This was a case for Terry the Cop, but Polyglot Elsa of the Elite Restaurant, with more cunning than conscience, had dispatched the intrepid Terry to the farther end of the beat upon a purely fictitious Italian riot. For reasons of her own she did not wish Terry punctured. Hence Our Square lurked about in the night shadows, watching the balladist from a respectful distance.

The Duchess rustled stiffly up to the fountain and bade MacLachan hold his peace. Old Sally followed with a market basket. MacLachan elevated his voice a pitch.

"Herror and fright were in his face.
The neighbors thought he was running a race;
He clung to a lamp-post to stay his pace,
But the leg broke away and kept up the chase,"

bellowed MacLachan. "I am not aweer," he added, "that now and here, you possess any legal authority in this Squeer!"

The Duchess pointed a stiletto-like finger at MacLachan. "You are a rum-wastrel," she pronounced severely.

MacLachan pointed his revolver at the Duchess, though rather waveringly. "I am," said he, "and proud of it."

"You will do some harm with that firearm."

"I will," said MacLachan, "and glad to do it."

"Go home to your bed and pray," ordered the stiff old lady contemptuously.

MacLachan regarded her gravely. "Fly, witch," he said. "Awa' wi' ye on yer broomstick. I have a silver bullet for yer life."

"Give me that pistol," she directed.

Quietly but firmly MacLachan shot her. At the same moment Old Sally hit him expertly on the head with a bottle from her market basket. MacLachan slumped forward and took his whirling thoughts carefully between his two hands. "I ha' done wrong," he presently concluded. "I ha' murdered my aged an' respectable aunt in cold blood. Tak' my weepon an' hale me to the gallus."

He passed his revolver over to a firm grasp. It was that of the Duchess. She was bleeding very slightly from the ear which MacLachan's bullet had grazed.

"Come home before you get into trouble," was the lady's command to the now cowed and repentant tailor, who suffered himself to be marched back to his Home of Fashion. The following day a deputation of us marched McLachan around to No. 17 to apologize. We could hear Mme. Rachel Pinckney Pemberton Tallefferr directing Old Sally to inform the deputation that she sent her compliments to us, and was not at home.

"That's the high-toned way of saying she don't want to see us," chirped the admiring Mr. Boggs between gratification and apology. "Aristocrat to the finger-tips! Haven't I always told you so?"

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BUT there came a time when he boasted less assuredly of his top-floor grandeur. One evening, in a burst of confidence, he unburdened himself to the Little Red Doctor and me. Madam was, he feared, losing interest in the lofty social sphere to which she had been called. Seldom, nowadays, did she go in her full regalia uptown. Automobiles came no more to his flattered door. Worst of all, her fascinating mail had dwindled, so that now there was but one regular communication of the sort, the letter bearing the mystic double circle of the Spirit of Guidance Group. Mr. Boggs surmised sadly that the goddess of his top-floor Olympus was growing old.

Very likely the phenomenon would have gone unexplained to this day had not both the Rosser twins fallen into the fountain simultaneously, contrary to their usual custom, which is for one of them to take the careless plunge while the other dances frantically on terra firma and yells till help comes. Mme. Tallafferr once termed them, "Death's playmates," because of this ineradicable passion for gambling on the brink of the pool which is just deep enough to cover their two-year-old heads. On this occasion Old Sally was the nearest aid. So she waddled fatly over and hauled them out easily enough. Then, quite inexplicably, she fell in herself and lay gently oscillating at the bottom of three feet of water. Still more inexplicably, she refused to come to properly when Mr. Boggs and I fished her out after not more than thirty seconds' immersion. Also she looked queerly flattened and misshapen and unnatural. So we ran her into the Little Red Doctor's office and awaited the verdict.

It was a long wait. When at length the Little Red Doctor emerged there was a wild kind of glint in his eye.

D'you know what's the matter with that old black idiot?" he demanded.

"Martyr to her own hee-roism," suggested Mr. Boggs, the romantic. "Is she drowned?"

The Little Red Doctor snorted: "She's starved. That's what she is!"

"She's as fat as butter," I protested.

"Fat like a sliver!" retorted the physician scornfully. "Padded!"

"What on earth should she pad for?" I cried.

"To fool her mistress. She's been going without food so as to buy more for madam."

At this information the eyes of the Destroying Angel bade fair to pop from their sockets. "D'ye meanter say they're poor?" he gasped.

The Little Red Doctor outlined the history of the aristocratic pair as he had extracted it from Old Sally.

According to what he had learned, the Duchess had left Virginia to save money and appearances, dragging along like a fetter a debt of honor contracted by a worthless scamp of a brother. Of course, it was not in any sense a legal debt, but she had considered it to be a blot upon the family 'scutcheon, and had been paying interest, and bit by bit the principal, from her rigidly conserved little income. Presently an investment which had been indicated through the Spirit of Guidance Group's interpretation of one of madam's dreams reduced its dividends and madam' cut off a few of

SCHEPSTEIN PHONED A TELEGRAM.

her filial memberships. Two items took precedence of all else—the rent and the debt.

"You meantertellme," chirped Mr. Boggs, "that Mme. Tallafferr hasn't had enough to eat?"

"I do not," said the Little Red Doctor emphatically. "She has. Old Sally hasn't. But her mistress doesn't know that."

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THE Little Red Doctor called Old Sally in.

"Now, Sally," said he, "we're all friends of yours here."

"Yessuh," said Old Sally gratefully.

"And freinds of your mistress."

Old Sally bristled. "My young mist'ess ain' needin' no frien's 'round yeah. She hol's her haid high!"

"Well, admirers, then," the Little Red Doctor amended. "The point is, we want to help. Now, haven't you got some things there you could sell without missing them? Some of that old furniture must be valuable."

"Sell the Tallaffeh homestead fuhniture!" cried Old Sally, scandalized.

"Well, perhaps madam has more of that old lace than she needs."

"The Pinckney lace!" said Old Sally in a tone of flat finality, which settled that point.

"Possibly, then, the diamonds," I suggested diffidently.

At this Old Sally's lips, which had been pressed firmly inward, inverted themselves. She began to blubber. The blubbering became a sobbing. The sobs waxed to subdued howls. From the midst of the howls one coherent and astounding statement emerged:

"I stole 'em."

"Stole the Pemberton diamonds!" cried Mr. Boggs in consternation. "What did you do with 'em?"

"Hocked," wept that sorry and shrunken old negress. "Gossome cheap trash in deir place to fool my young mist'ess. Her sight ain't good no mo'."

"And the money went for food," I suggested.

"Some. Rest I put on a dream figgah."

"Policy," explained the Little Red Doctor, who is wise in the ways of the world. "She dreamed a number and put her money on it in a policy shop. And it didn't come out. They never do."

"Ef it had," said Old Sally eagerly, "I'd 'a' had money to pay back dat eighteen hund'ed an' fo'ty-five dollahs an' fifty cents debt, an' plenty mo' besides. But I must 'a' disremembered my dream figgah."

"Very likely," agreed the Little Red Doctor gravely. "Come now, Sally, think. Isn't there anything you could sell out of the house?"

The old face began to work again. "My young mist'ess she'll like to skin me if I tell," she whimpered.

"I'll cross your eyes like Schepstein's, if you don't," threatened the Little Red Doctor savagely.

A deep breath signified the termination of her struggle between two fears.

"Tazmun," she enunciated in a mystical voice.

We looked at each other, puzzled. "What?" queried Mr. Boggs.

"Tazmun," she repeated determinedly. "Like whut you keep aroun' you to fotch luck. Rabbit foot's a tazmun."

"Talisman," I translated in a burst of inspiration.

"Dass it, tazmun."

"But you can't tell a talisman," objected the Little Red Doctor.

"Dis tazmun you can," eagerly asserted Old Sally. Whuh a heap o' money. My young mist'es keep it looked up in her jool box. Lawzee! How I has tried to get my han's on 'at oll' tazmun lettah. 'Cause we sho' need de money fo' it."

"A letter?"

"Dass it. Aut'graph tazmun letter. Fum Gen'al Stonewall Jackson, wrote to ol' Massah Pemberton, befo' de war."

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MR. BOGGS turned to me. "Dominie wouldn't that kind of letter be worth real money?"

"It's a fo'tellin' lettah," put in Old Sally eagerly. "It fo'tells de wah mo' dan ten yeahs befo' de wah."

In that case, I thought, it might be valuable historically. Anyway it would do no harm to get an offer from an expert. But could "young mist'ess" be induced to let it out of her hands? Old Sally thought it doubtful. Young mist'ess held that document in sacred veneration. Once a week she took it from its neatly addressed envelope to read it. Her spirit guide had declared that it would eventually bring fortune and happiness to her, if she would await the sign. What sign? Old Sally did not know. But she was certain that a marvelous "tazmun" such as Gen. Stonewall Jackson's foretelling letter would furnish a sign beyond all misconception.

"Sign? She shall have a sign," muttered the Little Red Doctor, who is wholly without conscience in any matter where he can pamper his insatiable appetite for helping others. Then to Sally: "But don't you say a word to her of what you have told us."

"Cotch me!" said that aged crone. "I don' want to get skint."

Mr. Boggs, as emissary, respectfully petitioned that the lady grant a conference to the Little Red Doctor, myself and himself upon a matter of business. We found her a faded and splendid figure amid the faded splendor of her belongings. She was clad in her stiffest black, she sat in the biggest Tallafferr chair, her throat emerged from the delicate and precious Pinckney lace, and there glittered in her innocent ears a grotesque travesty upon the small but time-honored Pemberton diamonds. She said: "To what am I indebted, sirs, for this visit?"

The Little Red Doctor explained that we were interested, historically, in a document which she possessed. The Duchess' sharp glance fixed the spokesman: "How, may I ask, did you learn of this document?"

"Through a dream," replied that shameless one.

Her glance livened. "Strange," she murmured. "You dreamed—what?"

"That there was preserved at the top of this house a prophetic letter of Stonewall Jackson's."

The old lady's eyebrows twitched. He had touched the right chord of superstition. Her voice was quite animated as she asked: "And you actually expected this dream to be confirmed."

"Pardon me; it is already confirmed. A few days after, I saw a newspaper clipping, stating that such a letter was said to be in existence, but that its whereabouts was unknown."

I shuddered. Couldn't the reckless idiot forsee the next question? It came straight and sharp:

"Have you the clipping?"

"I have."

I gasped with relief, wonder and admiration.

That wise young Ananias had quietly provided for it all by getting Inky Mike to set up and strike off a brief and vague article which the Little Red Doctor himself had composed for the occasion. Mme. Tallafferr read it with heightened color.

"This," she said to Old Sally calmly, "is without doubt the Sign."

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FROM a beautifully inlaid box she reverently took an old buff envelope stamped and postmarked, and put it in the Little Red Doctor's hands. "This, sirs," said she, "is my talisman. It was given to me, as his most prized possession, by my father, to whom it was written."

"What do you value this at, Mme. Tallafferr?" asked the physician.

Her reply came without hesitation. "Eighteen hundred and forty-five dollars and fifty cents."

"The Little Red Doctor's jaw fell. "Eighteen—did I understand you to say eighteen hundred?"

"And forty-five dollars and fifty cents. That is the minimum. It is perhaps worth more."

"Er—yes. Certainly. Very likely," said the Little Red Doctor jerkily.

"I bid you good day, sirs," said the Duchess. "You will, of course, exercise every care of Gen. Jackson's letter."

We bowed ourselves out. On the sidewalk we looked upon each other in dismay. "And Old Sally down to the last dollar," said the Little Red Doctor, neglecting to mention that he had given her the dollar.

"Let's try the letter on the trade, anyway," piped Boggs hopefully. "You can't tell but maybe it might be worth the money. Is there an autograph trade, dominie?"

I chanced, happily, to be informed upon this and to be able to make some definite suggestions. We went to Mr. Barker's small and recherche curio shop with the talisman. Mr. Barker did not bark. He purred. The substance of his purring was that while the letter was authentic beyond question and would be of interest to some southern historical society, it could claim no special value. As for the prophetic feature, upon which so much stress had been laid, a mere opinion that "Be it sooner or be it later, the moot question of state rights will demand a final settlement," could hardly be regarded as an inspired forecast of the civil war. However, should we say twenty-five dollars?"

As the business brains of our delegation, Mr. Boggs, intrusted with the bargaining, would not say $25. Mr. Boggs would not say anything remotely suggesting $25. Mr. Boggs would say good-day, which he forthwith did in great disgust of spirit. From Mr. Barker we went to Mr. Pompany. Mr. Pompany neither barked nor purred. He mumbled. The upshot of his submaxillary communication was a dim "Twenty dollars, take it or leave it." We left it, and Mr. Pompany, the latter with a Parthian arrow sticking in his soul (if he had one) in the form of Mr. Boggs' firm opinion, delivered in a baleful squeak, that he might be only an ignoramus, but had rather the appearance and bearing of a swindler.

"Thieves!" piped Mr. Boggs on the sidewalk. "Thieves and fatheads, the whole trade. What now?"

"Schepstein," said the Little Red Doctor. "He's a thief, to. But he knows."

Schepstein received us in his grubby, grimy, desolate front room, which did duty as an office, with a malevolent crossfire from his distorted eyes. "Bit of business?" he repeated after Mr. Boggs. "What business? State your business."

"For sale," piped Mr. Boggs, handing him the letter which he had taken from the envelope.

Hardly a glance did Schepstein give it. "Thomas Jonathan Jackson? Who's he? And who's this Maj. Pemberton?"

Mr. Boggs explained, in indignant piccolo tones, who Thomas Jonathan Jackson was. Not about Maj. Pemberton, however. No authority had been given to our deputation to disclose the ownership of the letter. So far as we were aware at that time, it would have meant nothing to Schepstein anyway. We had no reason, then, to suppose that he even knew Madam Tallafferr.

"Humph!" grunted Schepstein. "Stonewall Jackson, eh? Might be worth something. Lessee the envelope."

He looked it over carefully, front and back, folded the letter which he had not even read, and slipped it back in. "Leave it with me overnight," he suggested negligently. "I'll think it over and make you a price in the morning."

"Think as much as you like," returned Mr. Boggs, retrieving the treasure. "We'll keep this. And we'll be back at 11 tomorrow."

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OBSERVE, now, the advantages of living in a small self-centered community like Our Square, where everybody has an intimate (if not invariably friendly) interest in everybody else's affairs. Inky Mike had noted with curiosity our visit to Schepstein. As a press tender, the inky one naturally aspires to be a reporter, but his ideal reporter, being derived mainly from journalism as set forth in the movies, is a species of glorified compromise between Sherlock Holmes and Horace Greeley in a rich variety of disguises. He had no disguise handy, but he washed his face and followed Schepstein when that astute bargainer set forth immediately after our visit. Further, he listened outside the booth while the object of his sleuthing phoned a telegram. As he reported it in great excitement to our trio, it was addressed to a gentleman named Olds, in Cincinnati, and read to this esoteric effect—

"Alexandra local five forty-six perfect. What price. Answer quick."

"Who's Olds?" asked the Little Red Doctor.

"Olds? Doncher know Olds?" cried Inky Mike. "The oil king? The multamillionaire?"

"What has this to do with us?" I asked. "It seems to be some oil quotation. What does 'Alexandra local' mean?"

"Search me!" offered the amateur sleuth. "But don-choo fool yeurself! It's your business, awright. He snook out after you went, shakin' all over."

Mr. Boggs nodded a sagacious head. "Trust old Schep!" he fluted.

"When I've his money in hand; not before," grunted the Little Red Doctor.

When we called at the dingy and lonely flat on the following morning, Schepstein's face was a mask of smiling craft.

"It's worth possibly—pos-sib-ly fifteen dollars as a spec," he said.

"No," cheeped Mr. Boggs.

"But the autograph market is looking up. I'll take a chanst and give you twenty-five. Cash," he added impressively.

"No," repeated Mr. Boggs.

"What's the matter with you?" demanded Schepstein with rising truculence. "D'you wanta 'sell or don't cha? What's your price?"

"Eighteen hundred and forty-five dollars and fifty cents," said Mr. Boggs in a clear, businesslike soprano.

Schepstein did not sneer, nor explode, nor curse, nor do any of the things which I confidently expected him to do. His convergent vision seemed to focus on the buff envelope in Mr. Boggs' lumpy hand. He looked thoughtful, and, it seemed to me, almost respectful. "As she stands?" he asks.

"As she stands," assented Mr. Boggs.

"Bought," said Schepstein. And he wrote out a check to "Bearer."

At this the Little Red Doctor lost his head and profoundly altered the situation. "Ey thunder!" he cried, "Madam Tallafferr knew what she was talking about all the time."

Schepstein dropped his pen. "Who?" he asked in a rasping voice.

"Madam Tallafferr, across Our Square in Seventeen."

"Was that her letter?"

"Yes. We are acting as her agents."

"Ah, no!" said Schepstein softly.

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THEN an astounding thing happened. Two small, pinched tears welled out from the ill-matched points of flint which serve Schepstein for eyes. They were followed by two more. The little gnarly, cross-grained Jew dropped over the desk and his shoulders shook. A voice of falsetto anguish roused him.

"Don't cry on the check! You'll smudge it."

Schepstein lifted his head and gloomed at Boggs. "Nevamind that; it's all off," he gulped. "I got something to tell you people."

Between queer, shamed breath-catchings, he told us about his Metta's funeral. At the end he read us a telegram from Quentin Olds. When I was able to assimilate its full meaning, I found myself shaking hands with Schepstein, while Mr. Boggs danced a jig with the Little Red Doctor. Then Schepstein tore up the check for $1,845.50 and invited us around to the Elite Restaurant to luncheon, thereby affording a sensational titbit of news for Polygot Elsa's relating for a fortnight after. "Mr. Schepstein, he paid the whole compte. Was kennst du about that!"

Three days were required to finish the deal. Then through Old Sally the deputation trio sought and obtained another audience from the duchess. Mr. Boggs did the talking in terms worthy of his environment. "We have successfully terminated the negotiations, Mme. Tallafferr," he began.

The duchess bowed in silent dignity.

"And I have now the honor of turning over to you $1,845.50, as——"

"Hally-loo-yah, tazmun!" burst out Old Sally "Hally—hally—hally——" She caught her mistress' austere glance. "I knowed it was comin' so all along," she concluded, hercically compressing herself to a calm if belated assurance.

"—as the minimum price stipulated," pursued Mr. Boggs.

"I thank you," said the duchess.

"Also," concluded the agent, "a balance, after deducting all expenses of $2,153 20."

The duchess' face never so much as changed. "That is entirely satisfactory," she observed. "I have to thank you all for your successful efforts in securing a suitable price. My only regret," the quiet voice faltered a little, "is that circumstances should have forced me to part with an expression of esteem for my beloved father from one who was the greatest military hero of all history."

"You're in wrong, lady," caroled Mr. Boggs, his rhetoric suddenly melting in his excitement. "We sold the envelope alone for $4,000 net. There's only threee other of them 1846 Alexandria postmaster's stamps in the world today. So here's your Stonewall letter as good as new."

"My gawsh!" said old Sally, and fell down upon the floor and rolled and gave praise after the manner of her race, unrebuked this time of her mistress.

That aged and grand dame took back the letter with a hand which, for all that it had been rock-firm when it received MacLachan's revolver, now trembled a little. But her sole comment was: "And yet there are those so obstinate and shortsighted as to deny that the spirits guide us for our own good."

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ONCE more finely embossed stationery came pouring in at No. 17 Our Square, proudly edifying the soul of Mr. Boggs. Once more Mme. Tallafferr went forth on missions of social splendor, westward and uptown, sometimes in an automobile. Once more the restored Pemberton diamonds glistened in the fine, withered ears, old Sally having confessed and been duly forgiven.

Old Sally herself, replete and pompous, trotted to and fro in our square, brimful of smiling hints of a great honor that was to come to us. Her young mist'ess, she let it be known, was graciously pleased to be recognizant of the part, useful though humble, which our square had played in her re-establisher fortunes, and she was about to acknowledge it in a manner worthy of her family and her traditions. In old Sally's own words, she was going to "mo' dan even it up wif you all." Curiosity, speculation and surmise had become almost morbid in our square, when one morning there burst upon us, in an effulgence of glory, a mail as splendid as any which had ever brightened Mr. Boggs' worshipping eyes on its passage upward to his top floor. To Mr. Boggs himself it came, to Schepstein, to the little red doctor, to me, Polygot Elsa, and to many others, even down the scale as far as Inky Mike, this big white envelope, sealed with a square of black sealing wax and inclosing a most gratifyingly proud and stiff pasteboard card. That card still stands carefully dusted on many a mantel of our square, a guerdon and manifesto of social glory. At the top of it is blazoned the crest of the Tallafferrs, standing between the flag of the Confederacy and the coat of arms of old Virginia. Below runs this legend—in real engraving, if you please:

Mme. Rachel Pinckney
Pemberton Tallafferr
solicits the honor of your presence at
Number Seventeen, Our Square,
on Friday, November Eighteenth
to view an autograph letter indited
to her honored father, the late
Maj. Bently Pemberton, by
Lieut. (afterward Gen.)
Thomas Jonathan Jackson
Of the Army of the Confederate
States of America.
Refreshments R. S. V. P.

Our square had won social recognition.

(Copyright, 1923.)

"Lightning Tubes" Petrified Thunderbolts

"WHAT is a fulgurite?" is the question that puzzled a learned educator the other day. Perhaps a million of the visitors to the American Museum of Natural History last year are similarly ignorant and would like to be informed, so Dr. E. O. Hovey of the museum's department of geology was questioned, and he said: "Look at the series of fulgurites which has been placed on exhibition in the hall of general geology and meteorites on the ground floor of the museum, beyond the north Pacific hall." The specimens are from widely scattered parts of the earth and they represent the fulgurites formed in the rocks of Mount Ararat, as well as those made in the loose sands of Illinois, Michigan and the Desert of Sahara.

But what is a fulgurite? It is glass which often is produced when lightning strikes a mass of rock or a bed of dry sand and melts the material along its path. It is an effect of the most powerful electric furnace known to man. Fulgurite is not properly a mineral, or yet a single kind of rock, but it is a true glass, similar to the volcanic glass familiarly known to all as obsidian. The fulgurite glass is made by the melting of the bed through which the lightning has passed, and it marks the path followed by the electric current. When in sand the fulgurite is composed mostly of the fused mineral quartz or quartz and feldspar, but when in or on rock it has a chemical or mineralogical composition which varies with the kind of rock that has been struck, whether that may have been the granite gneiss of the Adirondacks, or the granite rocks of the Navada mountains, the Alps and the Pyrenees or the old lavas of Wyoming and Mount Ararat of Biblical fame.

We usually find this lightning-formed glass in the shape of more or less irregular tubes. The tube may be only a small fraction of an inch in diameter, but larger ones are more common, and some even two and one-half inches across have been found. Usually they are only a few inches in length, but in a European museum a specimen several feet in length is displayed. Sometimes the tubes are irregularly circular in their inner outline; more often they are flattened ellipses. Many tubes have their walls crushed together, as if by the pressure of the surrounding material before the glass had time to harden. The inside of the tubes is smooth and highly polished—a glassy surface. The outside is rough and irregular in shape, depending upon the extent to which the melting heat has affected the sand and the number of sand grains which have become embedded in the glass. The tubes in rocks are frequently solid or nearly solid glass, and sometimes the glass boiled over out of the hole onto the surrounding rock. When the lightning has struck the corner of a rock mass a tube has not been formed, but the glass has been plastered irregularly over the rock surface. Such films of fulgurite have been observed not only on rocks from the summit of Mount Ararat, as shown in the exhibit, but also on some from the mountains of Mexico, the Alps, the Pyrenees, the Auvergne and elsewhere.

Think of the magnitude of the force that can penetrate compact rock, or even loose sand, in the manner indicated to the depth of inches or feet and raise the temperature of the refractory minerals in its path to the melting point of quartz within the nine hundred-thousandth part of a second, which is the duration of time allotted by the physicists for the passage of an electric spark!

The nature and origin of fulgurites or lightning tubes has been known to scientists for a century, they having first been described in 1821 by Arago, a famous French astronomer and physicist, and later by a long line of other investigators, but it fell to the unusual lot of William Hallock, a professor in Columbia University, to see the bolt of lightning fall in August, 1920, which broke asunder granite gneiss on the side of Split Rock mountain, in the Adirondack mountains, and formed many areas of fulgurite on the surfaces of fragments which were thrown about.

Wireless Signals.

EXPERIMENTS of French scientists to determine the velocity of wireless signals indicate that this velocity is slightly lower than that of light. The method adopted was to send out a signal from the Eiffel Tower to a station whose distance has been very accurately ascertained. At the moment the signal reaches the second station a return signal is automatically sent back. The time of emission and reception is recorded by means of a photographic micro-galvaometer in which the record is made on a moving band of sensitive paper. Thus the time elapsing between two successive records will measure very accurately the time taken by the signal to travel the double distance. As a result of these experiments the following figures have been arrived at:

Paris to Toulon, .00237 seconds;
Paris to Washington, .02122 seconds,
with a possible error of .00001 seconds.

This indicates that the average velocity of the wireless signal is about 296,000 kilometers (185,000 miles) per second; that of light being about 186,000 miles per second.